

OUTPATIENT JOINT REPLACEMENT?!

Article by Dan Weiler - Photography Provided

Your surgeon looks you in the eye and says, "You need a joint replacement." What goes through your mind next? Most people think of the pain, complications, and recovery. Well, this isn't your grandmother's knee replacement! While the discomfort and risks are real, dramatic improvements in joint replacement surgery have reduced pain and complications, and patients can even walk, and in some cases, get back home the same day as their surgery!

Outpatient joint replacement is available right here in our community. The Ambulatory Surgical Center of Stevens Point, located in the Klasinski Medical Complex, is the community's first medical facility to provide advanced surgeries like joint replacements in an outpatient setting. Their surgeons have performed thousands of joint replacements. Over 100 of these have now been performed as outpatients at The Ambulatory Surgical Center of Stevens Point.



Innovations in surgical care in the last decade have been dramatic. The separation of healthy patients from those with chronic infection and disease has had dramatic and positive effects on the economics of

healthcare on a national level. Dedicated outpatient facilities now perform the country's majority of many types of surgeries. Just last month, a prominent east coast healthcare system opened its all-outpatient

joint replacement center. Ambulatory centers consistently deliver surgical care at the highest levels of patient satisfaction and for the lowest cost. As patients pay higher premiums and deductibles for less coverage, patients must receive higher value for their health spending. Ambulatory surgery delivers that value.

Prior to major surgery, in order to assure their readiness for a proposed procedure, patients undergo extensive testing. Why then should you have that surgery where the community's sickest patients are treated? It's just common sense to seek care at a center specializing in "clean" surgeries like joint replacements.

Pointers and Ploverites now entering their late 40s, 50s, and early 60s — the "Baby Boomers" — tend to be more active than previous generations were at middle age, with no expectations of slowing down. However, sometimes nature intervenes in the form of osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease in which the cartilage at the ends of the two bones breaks down, roughens, and ultimately wears out. The rubbing of bone-



on-bone can cause significant pain that only worsens over time.

When people are affected by arthritis, their general health usually suffers also. They tend to become "couch potatoes" because they can't do as much. Pain causes them to be less active, and weakness sets in. Lack of exercise leads to weight gain, which further impacts their health and also makes their arthritic symptoms worse. This spiraling, unhealthy,

process can be halted! Pain relief is obtained with "resurfacing" the joint using the newest and most advanced joint surgeries available at the Ambulatory Surgical Center of Stevens Point.

In past times, the only option was to be admitted to a hospital for this type of surgery. Advances in surgical technique, anesthetic care, pain management, and nursing, have combined to safely allow for outpatient joint replacement. Specialized surgery centers are a cleaner and safer environment in which to undergo most elective surgeries. Most persons simply go wherever their surgeon operates. You have a choice.

Even just a few years ago, these baby boomers were told to live with the pain or to cut back on activities and wait until later in life to have a joint replacement. This is no longer the case. Newer implants are expected to last more than 20 years and give the patient's back the quality of life which has suffered over time.

Joint replacements include total hip replacement, total knee replacement, uni-compartmental knee replacement, as well

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Thomas J Honl DDS, MAGD, Diplomate ABDSM, Fellow AACP

as total shoulder replacement. You must meet certain surgeon-specific criteria, and your insurance company must allow this as well. Many major insurance companies allow these procedures, including Anthem BC-BS, Security Health Plan and WPS, just to name a few. Persons considering joint replacement may call 715-345-0500 to learn if their insurance covers these procedures. They can also visit the website at www.ascstevenspoint.com to learn more about the surgical center.

Dr. Matthew Riordan from the Klasinski Clinic says, "Our joint replacement success relies upon careful patient selection, surgical and anesthetic expertise, and attentive and specialized one-on-one nursing, including state of the art pain management." This means you can expect to have a faster recovery. Patients are up and walking within hours of the surgery, and are home the same or next day! The benefits of their one-on-one nursing are extraordinary. Their surgeons also perform these same surgeries at local hospitals. Dr. Riordan states, "The advanced technology and perioperative monitoring systems combined with tender care from the ASC's staff create a care experience unlike any other available in our area."

They bill for one episode of care, without having to charge for medications and other things hospitals do," says Dr. Riordan. "If you need a joint replacement, we can tell you what you'll pay based on your insurance plan. We've had patients calling around to figure out the costs at various facilities in our area. Our business office helps people determine the cost of the surgery. Patients typically find we deliver excellent care for much less than area hospitals."

The Ambulatory Surgical Center of Stevens Point began performing joint replacements in 2010, with successful outcomes and high patient satisfaction. A recent patient "focus group," consisting of outpatient joint replacement patients, indicated they chose the surgical center for their procedure for several reasons, including this one: "I chose it because it was a germ-free environment, and I could go home the very next day".

John Nornberg, from Plover, underwent a uni-compartmental knee replacement in December of 2015. "I have been struggling with knee pain for close to 10 years, and I decided enough was enough, and I wanted



to have my quality of life back. I visited Dr. Riordan at the Klasinski Clinic. After discussing my personal situation, he recommended a uni-compartmental knee replacement to be performed at the Ambulatory Surgical Center of Stevens Point. With his recommendation, I scheduled my procedure, and I was delighted to find out I did not have to wait long at all and was accommodated within a few weeks of my decision for surgery. I was confident in the surgical center from the minute I walked through the door. The staff was professional and caring and they tended to my every need. I had a comfortable room that was designed for their joint replacement patients, and I was provided a menu to choose my food from a local restaurant, plus a complimentary meal was provided for my wife. My pain was well-managed at the surgical center, and I was able to walk out with the aid of crutches on the same day as my surgery. I was even able to return to my Information Technology position at Great Lakes Education Corporation here in Stevens Point in two weeks after my surgery."

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Health and fitness is the focus of this issue of the *Point & Plover Publication*. Don't let an unhealthy joint rule your life and your future fitness. Having gone through knee surgery many years ago, I can tell you from experience, I wish the outpatient joint replacement program was available to me back during the time of my knee trouble.